

VZCZCXRO6629
PP RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHDR #0224/01 0991801
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 081801Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7451
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 3293
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 1396
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA PRIORITY 2651
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 3142
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0089
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI PRIORITY 1087
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0376
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 0933
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0285
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DAR ES SALAAM 000224

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/08/2018
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [TZ](#)
SUBJECT: TANZANIA: MINISTER MEMBE DEFENDS TO DIPLOMATS
CCM'S CALL FOR A REFERENDUM; CUF INSISTS ORIGINAL AGREEMENT
MUST BE HONORED

REF: A. DAR ES SALAAM 0206
[1B](#). 07 DAR ES SALAAM 1581
[1C](#). 07 DAR ES SALAAM 0888

Classified By: Ambassador Mark Green for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Bernard Membe, defended to Dar es Salaam-based diplomats on April 4 the decision of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party to insist on a referendum among Zanzibari voters on a powersharing agreement within the Government of Zanzibar (GOZ). In a short briefing during which he also outlined the African Union (AU) positions in the Comoros and Zimbabwe, Membe asked diplomats to "urge the leaders of the opposition Civic United Front (CUF) party to return to the talks" in order to discuss this new proposal.

[1](#)2. (C) In a meeting with Ambassador Green earlier the same day, Dr. Ibrahim Lipumba, the CUF National Chairman, said CUF leaders were caught completely by surprise by the March 31 move from the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the CCM to call for a referendum on the powersharing arrangement for the GOZ which senior leaders from the two parties had negotiated over a period of some fourteen months. CUF sees this proposal as a delaying tactic to avoid making a decision about any interim power-sharing arrangement within the GOZ before the 2010 elections. Lipumba confirmed that the agreement the two parties reached would require changes to the Zanzibar Constitution, but the modality to ratify constitutional amendments is a two-thirds majority in the Zanzibar House of Representatives. In other words, even if a referendum could be agreed upon, there would still need to be legislative action. The constitution is silent on referendums and in the 46-year history of both Zanzibar and Tanzania Mainland there has never been a referendum.

[1](#)3. (C) Minister Membe told the diplomats that the March 24-25 invasion of Anjouan by the Comoran army and assisted by AU troops was successful, appreciated the international

community's support and publicly thanked the United States and France for their commitment, especially within the P-5. He confirmed that at least half of the 1,000 AU troops in Anjouan will stay until the new elections are completed, which needs to be within 90 days (ref A). Privately, Ambassador Green asked Minister Membe if he had the specifications the USG needed in order to provide the vessel the GOT had previously requested to support the ongoing AU operation. Membe said he thought they "were on my desk" and he would send them right away. However, Minister Membe did not subsequently send this information to the Embassy that day.

14. (SBU) Membe confirmed that the situation in Zimbabwe remains extremely tense. The AU election observation team in Zimbabwe has made no statement regarding the elections and will not do so until the results are announced. President Kikwete, as the AU Chairman, is in daily consultations with other key African leaders, especially President Mbeki, exploring ways to assure the elections will conclude successfully. End summary.

Rift between CCM Zanzibar and CCM Mainland members deepens

15. (C) While Minister Membe attempted to tell the diplomatic community that a referendum on a powersharing agreement was a "democratic approach" to resolve the impasse in Zanzibar, and encouraged the Ambassadors to convince CUF leaders of the same, a CCM insider told Ambassador Green April 2 that the suggestion for a referendum originated with President Karume, who to date has made no public statement indicating that he would accept any type of transitional or powersharing government in Zanzibar. A personal assistant to President

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Kikwete confided to the Ambassador that an already bitter divide between CCM Zanzibar and CCM Mainland members deepened during the March 29 to 30 NEC meeting, held in northern Tanzania, near President Julius Nyerere's hometown. The debates were intense and emotional with senior CCM Zanzibar members considering any powersharing arrangement to go completely against the "spirit of the Zanzibar revolution." According to sources, CCM Zanzibar even threatened to leave the CCM and return to their original Afro Shirazi Party (ASP) revolution-era party, although it is hard to know how seriously that treat should be taken. (NOTE: In 1977, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) led by Julius Nyerere joined with the ASP which had come to power during the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar, to form the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). End note.) It appears that CCM Mainland leaders, including President Kikwete, supported President Karume's call because they were unable to produce any other solution that CCM Zanzibar would accept at the NEC meeting.

Referendum unprecedented in Tanzania

16. (C) To date, CUF leaders have refused any consideration of a referendum, nor of returning to the negotiating table. In their view, after 14 long months, an agreement was reached in early March 2008, that only needed to be approved by the central committees of both parties. In an April 1 statement, CUF accuses the CCM of going back on its word to reach and sign an accord between the senior party leaders. Both sides had agreed that any changes to the Zanzibar constitution needed to put that agreement into effect would be ratified according to the law by a two-thirds majority of the Zanzibar House of Representatives; never once in 14 months was a referendum mentioned. As CUF officials point out, no referendum was used when the switch was made to multiparty democracy or when Tanzania decided to join the East Africa Community or even when the constitution was changed to add the requirement that Tanzania's vice president come from Zanzibar.

17. (C) Although President Kikwete in his April 2 address to the nation and Minister Membe to the diplomats tried to make

the case that bringing the issue to the people is "democratic", Dr. Lipumba, Chairman of CUF, was adamant that his party considers the suggestion for a referendum to be unconstitutional; but more importantly, CUF considers this "surprise" from CCM leaders to be a severe breach of faith, especially in the trust CUF leaders have had in President Kikwete's sincerity to achieve reconciliation in Zanzibar. Based on that trust, CUF leaders have encouraged their members to be patient for the past two years.

18. (C) During Minister Membe's briefing, Ambassador Green asked if an agreement approved by the referendum would go into place before 2010 and Membe replied: "Yes." However, the President's assistant told the Ambassador that same day all discussions at the NEC meeting were only about power sharing "post 2010 elections." CUF leaders themselves have no idea what the referendum would entail. The only official letter they have received from CCM since April 1 is an invitation to come back to the negotiating table, with no details and no mention of a referendum.

CUF's election concerns

19. (C) While some diplomats expressed to the Ambassador their view that a referendum on a powersharing agreement might be a "fair approach," few if any CUF leaders or members would agree. After seeing severely rigged elections in 1995, when the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) stopped the election in the middle of the day and in 2000, when ballot boxes were removed from polling stations by the police, CUF has little faith in the electoral process and a truly independent ZEC unless they are also participating in the government. Even in 2005, when the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and

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other observers' reports noted that voting procedures in Zanzibar had improved slightly, once the ballot boxes left the district counting stations, the tabulation of votes did not proceed at the ZEC, but at a heavily guarded government-owned hotel. When the final result was announced, CCM's candidate, Amani Karume, was said to have received 53 percent of the vote. Many observers believe if the vote had been completely transparent and fair, it would have been a dead heat, possibly requiring a recount. The election results were so clearly flawed, that then U.S. Ambassador Michael Retzer, did not attend President Karume's inauguration.

110. (C) The Zanzibar Electoral Commission is appointed by President Karume; the ZEC is responsible to ensure that the voters register is up to date. The register was not fully vetted and "cleaned up" when the 2005 elections took place and CUF has no reason to believe that the register has been improved in any way. A referendum would basically be an election and could very likely split right down party lines, unless both CCM and CUF went to their party members and asked them to support it. The reason that there is a need for reconciliation is that there has not been a multiparty election yet in Zanzibar that observers have concluded was free and fair. CUF leaders have a hard time supporting what would essentially be yet another election to solve the injustices they felt they suffered as a result of past elections. If, however, some kind of modest power-sharing agreement were put in place prior to the next election, whether a referendum or a regular election, CUF might begin to have some confidence that President Karume and CCM Zanzibar were sincere about reform and that the election process would be conducted in an impartial manner.

111. (C) CUF might also be more inclined to support a referendum if this included a powersharing structure on the ballot that would go into effect before 2010, as Minister Membe mistakenly said in response to Ambassador Green's question. After all, in previous discussions with the Ambassador, CUF leaders said they believed that "confidence building measures" in the form of modest pre-2010

powersharing were close to being finalized, and the only thing standing in the way of an agreement.

Heightened tension in Zanzibar

¶12. (C) During his visit to Pemba on April 5, Ambassador Green met with two CUF Members of the Union Parliament and five members from the Zanzibar House of Representatives who gave him a copy of a paper that was circulated widely in Stonetown the previous evening. The three lines stated tersely that all Pembans should pack up and leave Unguja (the large island where Stonetown is located) within 30 days; if Pembans do not heed this warning, then "look for consequences like in 1964" -- a reference to the Zanzibar revolution. The legislators, particularly those from the House of Representatives, bemoaned that the cooperation between CCM and CUF had been increasing over the past months in the House while the inter-party negotiations were in progress; now those gains appear to be vanishing. The Ambassador was told that almost at the same moment that CCM Mainland announced its call for a referendum, CCM Zanzibar core party members were called to the Zanzibar State House for a "victory celebration" that became so boisterous it overflowed into the streets of Stonetown. He has not been able to verify this. While in Pemba, Ambassador Green also heard, but did not actually see, that petitions were circulating on the Island for Pemba to secede from Zanzibar.

Comment: Next steps

¶13. (C) Dr. Lipumba has yet to make a public statement in response to President Kikwete's April 2 speech. The Secretary General of CUF and three-time CUF presidential

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candidate in Zanzibar, Malim Seif Hamad, left for Europe

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April 3 to meet with leaders in capitals that support the democratic process in Zanzibar. In Ambassador Green's discussions with Dr. Lipumba and Ismail Jussa, CUF's International Affairs Advisor, there was clearly both shock that what appeared to CUF to be a final deal has fallen apart and a new mistrust toward President Kikwete. In addition, President Kikwete left April 5 for a two week trip abroad; about the same time he is scheduled to return, President Karume will leave the country. Thus the two leaders cannot meet face to face for at least four weeks.

¶14. (C) Since losing the elections for the Zanzibar presidency in 2005, CUF has managed to keep its rank and file members in line, with the promise that serious reconciliation discussions were proceeding that would lead to an equitable resolution with the CCM. While we trust that Dr. Lipumba and his deputies will continue to project this message, it could appear to many CUF members that the bar has suddenly been set much higher, a test of patience for any political party that believes it has been marginalized. That being said, we also believe that the Ambassador and Embassy officials are in a good position to talk with both CCM Tanzania and the CUF leaders. We will continue to try to persuade President Kikwete and our CCM contacts to include a pre-2010 powersharing arrangement in a referendum or any final reconciliation agreement because it would appear essential to building some confidence amongst CUF leaders in future transparent elections and to long-term stability in Zanzibar.

GREEN